

What you need to know (COVID-19)

This Religious Instruction Frequently Asked Questions document is intended to assist places of worship that provide religious instruction to their congregants' children during non-school hours.

1. How is COVID-19 spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person who has symptoms through:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

2. What type of Religious Instruction does this FAQ pertain to?

This Frequently Asked Questions pertains to religious instruction provided for children at Places of Worship during non-school hours or on the weekends. It does not impact or substitute for County of Los Angeles Health Officer Order requirements for K-12 Schools and is separate from the requirements for public and private schools.

3. What is Public Health's guidance for Religious Instruction held at Places of Worship?

Public Health recommends that Religious Instruction to the extent practicable be held outdoors or virtually, as it is for those at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Regardless of the location, the social (physical) distancing, face masking, and other safety modification requirements found in the Los Angeles County Health Officer Order (Order) and Appendix A of the Order must be followed.

Places of Worship, however, can hold Religious Instruction indoors at 25% maximum capacity of the room where the instruction is provided, based upon the applicable Building or Fire Code limitation. Providers of Religious Instruction need to adhere to the Places of Worship requirements of the Order as well as Appendix A.

4. When Providing Religious Instruction, how should students be grouped?

Students should be grouped in the same space and in stable groups (cohorts) as small and as consistent as possible. Students should be grouped with the same instructors. To the extent practicable, keep students from the same household in the same Religious Instruction group. The student cohort size may be up to 14 students with up to 2 stable instructors. These group cohorts should remain stable to reduce close contact between students and instructors from other groups. Students should not transfer to another group. An instructor should not be assigned to more than two different stable groups of students.

5. Are we allowed to hold services indoors?

Although not recommended, yes, indoor services are allowed at 25% indoor maximum capacity of the room where the instruction is provided. As provided in the Health Officer Order protocol, Public Health recommends continuing outdoor or virtual services or ceremonies. If in-person indoor services are held, the number of persons in attendance indoors shall be limited to 25% of the maximum occupancy, based upon the applicable Building or Fire

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Code limitation. All person attending either indoor or outdoor services must comply with all infection control and physical distancing requirements, as specified in the Order and Appendix A, including clergy, staff, volunteers, attendees, and any visitors. All such persons must maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance from people that do not live with them (people from different households) and all must correctly and consistently wear a face mask over both their nose and mouth at all times while in or on the grounds of the facility and when walking near or past non-household members.

6. What about singing as part of Religious Instruction, is that allowed?

Singing, chanting, shouting and physical exertion significantly increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission because these activities increase the release of respiratory droplets into the air. Per the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), activities such as singing, and chanting negate the risk reduction achieved through six feet of physical distancing. For details related to singing and chanting, see the CDPH guidance online at <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship--en.pdf>. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends organizations consider temporarily suspending singing, chanting, and shouting, especially when indoors.

If singing occurs, it should only occur outdoors, and to reduce the risk of spread of respiratory droplets, all attendees 1) must wear a face covering at all times, even while singing; and 2) must maintain at least 8-10 feet of physical distance from others.

7. What are the important infection control precautions that providers of Religious Instruction must continue to take?

There are steps that providers of Religious Instruction should take to [reduce the risk](#) of instructors or students getting sick or infecting others with COVID-19.

All participants should:

- Wear a cloth face covering whenever outside of their home and around non-household members, people who do not live with them.
- Practice [social or physical distancing](#). Keep at least 6 feet apart from everyone else as much as possible.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact, like sharing cups or utensils, toys, or sports equipment (unless it has been disinfected before sharing).
- Avoid or clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often using a regular household cleaning product.
- Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If no tissue is available, use your elbow (not your hands).
- Increase ventilation - go outside or open windows if it is safe to do so.
- Stay home if they are sick.

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8. Is Religious Instruction provided by a Place of Worship allowed in private homes?

Private gatherings with individuals that are not part of your household are not allowed indoors at a private residence. Outdoor private gatherings of up to three (3) households with a maximum of 15 persons from those households are permitted with specific restrictions. See “Private gatherings” in Section 3.a of the County Health Officer Order online at http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO_SaferatHomeCommunity.pdf.

9. Are food and snacks allowed to be provided?

No, visitors and patrons are not allowed to eat or drink onsite, in compliance with Appendix A.